

Miscellaneous Notes

1. OCCURRENCE OF THE RUSTY SPOTTED CAT *FELIS RUBIGINOSA* GEOFFROY IN SOUTH GUJARAT

It might interest readers to note the occurrence of the Rusty Spotted Cat *Felis rubiginosa* Geoffroy in south Gujarat. The northernmost record of the range of this cat hitherto recorded was south of Nasik.

I have collected two specimens, one in Dangs District and the other in the adjoining forest of Bansda Taluka (Surat District). One of the skins was identified by the Bombay Natural History Society and is kept in the Society's collection. The other is mounted in the museum of St. Xavier's High School, Bombay.

In an article by Mr. Gee in the April 1963 issue of *Cheetal* (Journal of Wild Life Preservation Society of India) he lists the Rusty Spotted Cat as one of the nearly exterminated species of animals. Mr. Gee and myself would both feel grateful for any further news which the Society or the readers of the *Journal* may be able to give us regarding this very rare species of cat.

DIGVIR NIVAS,
BANSDA, SURAT DISTRICT,
GUJARAT,
November 22, 1963.

M. S. DIGVEERENDRASINHJI
Maharaja of Bansda

[In Volume 45 of the *Journal* Mr. Humayun Abdulali reported this cat to be fairly common round Suriamal in north Thana District. There is no reason to think that the position has changed.—EDS.]

2. A FURTHER RECORD OF BLAINVILLE'S BEAKED-WHALE, *MESOFLODON DENSIROSTRIS* (BLAINVILLE), FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN : CETACEA

(With a map)

In Volume 60 (3) : 727-30 of the *Journal* I recorded the occurrence of Blainville's Beaked-Whale [*M. densirostris* (Blainville)] from the Indian Ocean. Since its publication, Dr. Yaichiro Okada informed

me of a second capture of a male by Japanese fishermen in the Indian Ocean.

In his letter of December 20, 1963, Dr. Okada enclosed some photographs of parts of the specimen which unmistakably indicate the true identity of the species.

The specimen was caught by the fishing boat *Hiyoshima* of Omaizaki at a point $105^{\circ} 35' E. \times 24^{\circ} 40' S.$, on the 28th October 1963. Unfortunately, only a tooth and a portion of the rostrum was saved from the carcass—the balance of the animal was cast into the sea.

The accompanying map shows the known distribution of the species. The only known females, apparently young animals, are recorded from the North American Atlantic coast. Most of the other specimens recorded (or deduced from the character of the teeth) are males. The breeding area of this species is not established. That males of the various species, especially young males and very occasionally females, wander far from the breeding grounds is illustrated by several species. However, we have yet a lot to learn of the habits and distribution of these comparatively rare whales. Nevertheless, from the records of other species with foetuses, neonatals or young calves, few though they may be, it appears that *Mesoplodon* breeds in the vicinity of the larger archipelagos of the world, during the spring and summer of the Northern and Southern Hemispheres respectively. Although it is perhaps presumptive, it is not unreasonable to suggest that *M. densirostris* breeds (or calves) in the vicinity of the great archipelagos of the Caribbean Sea, i.e. nearest the area where the greatest number of both sexes appear, and that non-breeding males wander in small schools or as lone animals far from their 'home waters'.

The great distances travelled away from 'home waters' may at first sight appear prodigious and naturally arouse some doubts—the distances varying from several hundreds to a few thousands of miles during the interval between one breeding season and the next. However, such distances appear to be of little consequence to such animals as whales. Several of the commercial whales are now definitely known to travel several thousands of miles annually, from feeding to breeding grounds and back again to the feeding grounds, along with the calves within a short space of a few months. The annual migration of the Humpback Whale (*Megaptera nodosa*) is a well-known case, feeding in the Antarctic and breeding in tropical waters near the equator and thence back again to the Antarctic to feed. Little or no feeding takes place during the period the animals

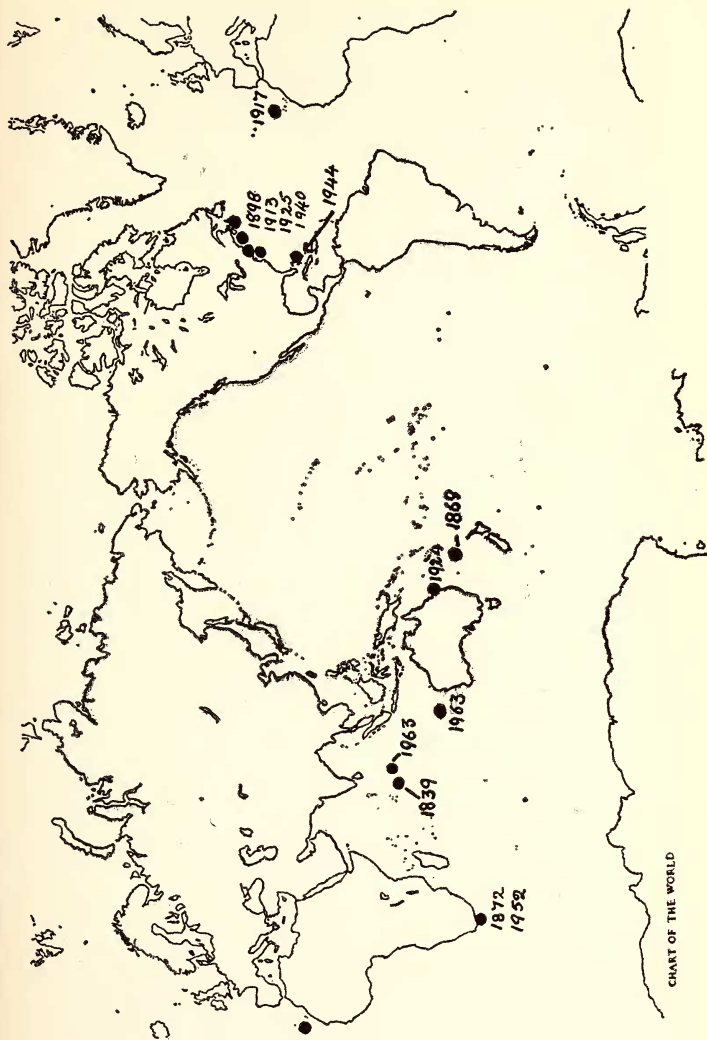


CHART OF THE WORLD

Distribution of Blainville's Beaked-Whale *Mesoplodon densirostris* (Blainv.)